Project I.D. No. 108

NAME: REV. NISHIMURA, MASAMOTO DATE OF BIRTH: 1895 PLACE OF BIRTH: TOTTORI
Age: 80 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: HIGH SCHOOL + SEMINARY (1923)

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1912? Age: 17 M.S. Y4 Port of entry: SAN FRANCISCO
Occupation/s: 1. FLOWER SHOP 2. MISSIONARY (ORDAINED)
Place of residence: 1. OAKLAND 2. _____ 3. _____
Religious affiliation: CHRISTIAN
Community organizations/activities: MINISTRY/EVANGELIST
* SAN QUENTIN PRISON MINISTER 1930 - 1941 *

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: TANFORAN
Name of relocation center: TOPAZ
Dispensation of property: STORED IN CHURCH Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. MINISTRY 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: NEW YORK 1944

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: OCT 1945
Address/es: 1. BERKELEY 2. _____
3. MONTEREY
Religious affiliation: CHRISTIAN
Activities: 1. MINISTRY 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: ~~EH~~ KUSUNOKI Date: 2/75 Place: MONTEREY
Translator: TACARABE

* UNIQUE EXPER. + INFO RE: ISSEI CONVICTS SAN QUENTIN

NAME: Masamoto Nishimura, Rev.

AGE: 80 years old

BIRTH DATE: Jan 26, 1895

PLACE OF BIRTH: Tottori Ken

MAJOR OCCUPATION: Free Methodist Minister

RELOCATION CENTER: Topaz

INTERVIEW DATE: July 25, 1975

INTERVIEW PLACE: Monterey, Calif.

INTERVIEWER: Toshi Kusunoki

TRANSLATOR: Heihachiro Takarabe

Q: I would like you to state your name first.

A: My name is Masamoto Nishimura

Q: Where were you born?

A: Tottori Ken, Hino-Gun, a mountain side.

Q: When were you born?

A: In Jan. 26, 1895, 28th year of Meiji.

Q: Do you remember anything from your childhood?

A: I was given to another family as yoshi when I was one year old and three months. I was given to my uncles/ family. My father and my uncle and others got together and built a construction company. At the time when I went to his family as a yoshi, he had a sake store.

My father had a soy source store at a different location. He was not a Christian yet. It was when I was three years old when he bacame a Christian.

Q: There was a very few Christians at that time.

A: Yes, that's right. My sister was born a year and a half later. B y that time my father was a Christian.

Q: What was the reason why your father had become a Christian?

A: My father's family was very welthy, so he did whatever he wanted to do. He also traveled a lot. They say, "Even the dog which walk around come across interesting thing." He met a missonary in Matsue. He was the famous missionary named Rev. Bacton. He was taught by this missionary adn received Baptism.

Q: My mother also became a Christian. I didn't know real parents until I was 6 years old. When I became 6 years old, my father (uncle) died of stroke. At that time I discovered that I had a real parents. After her -usband died my mother (real aunt) went back to her parents home. I lived with my grandparents. My real father sold the sake store. He must have been in his 50's. He failed in the business and he did not know how to deal with himself. This was his weakness. That's why it was easy for him to enter the faith.

Q: Do you have any other recollection from your childhood?

A: Well, I remember when I was 3 or four years old. I was taken to a famous shrine by my adopted parents. This shrine was said to be the gardian for Japanese Sake which was located in Matsuye in Shimane Ken. At that time we stayed in an inn. I still remember the

that experience. There was a small stream right in front of that shrine. There were many fish in that stream and I enjoyed watching them.

Q: How about your schools?

A: I went up to 4th grade in Chugakko (12th grade) and then came to America. Before that my grandfather died when I was 11 years old. It was in January. So I went to Yonago where my mother lived. I finished Koto Shogako (8th grade). Then I entered Chugakko (Middle school). I had to quit it in the middle of of the fourth grade in the middle school and came to America.

Q: When you say Chugakko, it is comparable to the high school here.

A: Yes.

Q: Were you Christian, then?

A: Yes, I was exposed to, however, I was not a Christian. My real father came to America when I was about 10 years old. He went to Hawaii and then to the main land. From that time on I lived with my mother in Yonago. When I came to America, I was with my younger sister. My father came to America ahead of me. My sister

and I were the last to come.

My father had a flower business in Oakland. When I came I helped my father's business. I was 17 years old then. Because my parents were Christians, I was made to go to church from the next Sunday. It was the Oakland Methodist Church.

I received baptism next year. However, I was not a real Christian, yet. At that time there was a minister by the name of Zenzo Qatanabe. He is now over 90 years old, if he is still alive. He came to our home and let a Bible study. I listen to it quite a few times. My heart began to be awaken. So I began to read the B ible real well. I became a real Christian when I was 19 years old.

Q: You were 16 when you came to America.

A: Yes, I was 17 years old.

Q: I would like to hear your experience of coming to America.

A: My sister was attending women's high school from the mission outpost. I was in a domitory and attended a middle school. When I came to America, my father's

friend took care of me in Tokyo. It was April of 1912. I came to America with my sister. I have 9 brothers and sisters.

The ship I came on was called Perusha Maru. Many passengers were returnees. There were many who came back to get married.

We stopped at Hawaii, only one day though, for a sight seeing. Then we ate dinner at a restaurant. At that time that famus Titanic sunk. I saw that on a newspaper. I was really surprised.

The life on board was read bad. I was rather a bad young man who learned to gamble. I gambled on the ship and lost all the money I had. At that time each person had to have a t least $50 as a "show money." It is a preparation money. In case one failed to pass inspection , he would have enough money to go back to Japan. One couldn't get on board if he didn't have that money.

I had $100 for my sister and myself. I lost $60 of it. I didn't know what to do. Then a man who was returning to America said that he would loan me the money. So he loaned me enough to pass the inspection.

I returned the money to his as soon as I landed.

Q: What else do you remember from the life on board.

A: There were some who were returnees who ate American food all the time. One of them got sea sick and couldn't eat any food. So he gave them to me. It was a real good food, too.

q; When you left Japan, what kind of country did you think America was?

A: I used to think that everybody in America was Christian. So I thought Americans would not drink or smoke and they would not commit crimes. However, when I came, it was not too much differnet from my own country.

Q: What did your parents tell you?

A: I didn't hear anything from my parents.

Q: Where did you land?

A: San Francisco.

Q: How was your first impression of America?

A: My older brother came to see me. He came to America 2 years before.

Q: How about in the Immigration office?

A: Well, no problem. They did not ask me to show the money. I went to Oakland directly, to my parents home.

Q: What do you remember about the first week in the USA?

A: Well, that night, you see, I spent all the money I had. So I was really worried that my father might ask me about that money. Then he came over to my room and called my name. He asked me a bout the money. So I said I spent it and I had only $40 left. My father said, "Is that so. But don't do things like that any more."

At that time I learned for the first time my father's love towards me. He didn't even scold me. He just said, "Is that so. But don't to it any more." That was all. So I was very touched and I cried a lot in my bed alone.

Q: Did your sister know about it?

A: No, I don't think so.

Q: Then you began to help your father's flower business.

A: Yes, that's right. There was a man, by the name of Nishimura who was my sister's hus band, who was a long time Christian. He used to read a lot of books. He had a lot of books about Christianity. So I began

to read them, too. I read them very seriously, too.

I read about the history of Reformation and also about the myrters who died so willingly. When I read this, I knew there was something which I couldn't grasp. I read some more books.

It was in Oct. 18, 1913 that I confessed my sins before God and entered the faith.

Q: Did you go to school at that time?

A: No, I didn't. Well, I did go to night school for English. It was for everyone, not just for Japanese. So I didn't understand it very well. I don't remember very well about that. I attended it for about one year.

After I became a Christian, I began to study harder. I helped my father for 5 and 1/2 years. Then I received a call to become an evangelist. I told this to my father. He asked me to help him a few more years.

At that time, I couldn't go to school right away. So I bought an English Bible and began to read it. I read it many times over, so even though I didn't understand each words, I understood what I was reading. This is how I studyed English.

Q: When you helped your father, did he have other workers?

A: Yes, Mr. Nishimura was my workmate. He was very methodical. He worked hard and when he worked. He studied very hard when he finished his work. These were my experiences. I learned from those books and from Mr. Nishimura. Rev. Watanabe went back to Japan in 1915. I studied under him, too.

After that I attended a Free Methodist Church in Berkeley. I helped a missionary there. I began to preach there, too. I couldn't do that every Sunday, though.

Q: Is'nt Bay Area the original place of Japanese evangelism?

A: Yes, in San Francisco. Then it came to Oakland. At that time, there was no exceptional people. All of them were the same. There was a large floral shop, Domotos. There were other floral stores, too. Other than that many worked as domestic workers, or at dressshop.

There was an insurance agent in the Oakland church. He is still well in Oakland. His name is Takeshita. Most of them had jobs as domestic workers or school boys.

I don't know how much my brother-in-law, Nishimura, used to make, but there was a man who came to America

recently. He was paid $30 with room and board. Others who worked at the floral shop like Portuguese or Spanish were paid $1.25 a day. He had to bring his own lunch. They worked 8 hours a day. They worked very hard without break.

Then, I went to Northwest Nazarene College in Idaho. I knew its president. My idea was that I wanted to study for 2 years and then become an evengelist. However, when I got there, I found out that I wasn't ready. I had to begin from high school. I got some credit for the subjects I had in Japan. I finished it in 5 and 1/2 years and I graduaged from that college in 1923.

Q: Can you remember any interesting recollection from that time?

A: The school was very nice. I felt very good. It was based on Nazarene Church. They were very good to me. When they had some events, they invited me to come, too.

When I went there, I didn't understand anything. I went back to my father house during summer vacation. When I came back my younger brothers talked to me in English. But I didn't understand what they were

talking about. I was really disappointed in my ability. I felt like quitting school.

When I came back the next summer vacation, I could understand them much better. So I finished high school and college. Everyone was good to me begining with the president down the line.

Q: Have you encountered any discrimination?

A: No, not at all. On the contrary, they were very good to me. I suppose it might have to do with the fact that I was a forigner. I also attended white people's church there, too. I became a member there. I did everything which other white people would do.

After 2 years, I began to work at the evengelism outpost with my friend. We evangelized people in the vicinity. However, he came back to California, so I had to do it all by myself. I continued this till I graduated from the college. I still correspond with those people whom I met during that time.

Q: What happened when you finished the college?

A: I finished school in 1923. Right before I finished my college, I received a license as a minister from

Nazarene Church. So when I graduated from the college, I received ordination.

On the way back to California, I stepped out on to a cirtain rail road station. There I met a white missionary who had just retuned from Japan. He was a Free Methodist. He said that he was going to be the head of Westcoast Free Methodist Conference. He wanted me to come with him and join him for his work. Well, I had to think about it.

After some thought, I decided to work in the Free Methodist Conference. I think I gave the final reply after I came back home. I graduated from the college in the middle of June and began to work in a Free Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

Q: How old were you then?

A: Let's see ... I was 28 years old.

Q: Were you married then?

A: No, I wasn't. I thought I had to study as much as I could, so I attended Theological School at USC as I worked as a pastor.

Well, it was very difficult to be enrolled at the

university while I worked as a pastor. So I had to withdrow from the university. I also tried other times, too, but again I could not continue. I felt that it was not good. So I resigned as the pastor at the end of 1925 and enrolled at the university full time. Soon after that I got married. We got married in Glandale, near Los Angeles.

Q: How did you meet with your wife?

A: There was a famous Kanto Daishinsai (Kanto Great Earthquake) in 1923. I came to Los Angeles on Sep.1, 1923. It was the day after the earthquake. I read about it on a newspaper. Soon after that American Salvation Army rose up for Emergency Aid work.

Japanese Salvation Army in San Francisco also rose up for the occasion and began to solicit donations from Japanese communities. For this work two officers of the Salvation Army came to Los Angeles from San Francisco. These two were visiting Japanese families in many areas with a Los Angeles area commander. I met them at a home where they were visiting.

I knew Mr. Tsukamoto (the commander), so he introduced me to these two ladies. One of these ladies became my wife later on. She was a Captain then.

However, because of the regulation of the Salvation Army, we couldn't get marry right away. My sister's husband joined the Salvation Army. He became our go-between and we were engaged. We were married on Ap. 14, 1925.

From then on ... well, my wife had to get another job. So she became a Japanese school teacher. She tought 5 days a week, after children came back from the public school. We had a Japanese school at our church, too. On Saturday she tough Saturday School in Anahime. It was about 30 mi from our home. Meanwhile, I continued my schooling. I also helped her out.

Q: You were ordained by Nazene Church, but you were working for Free Methodist Church and your wife was a Salvation Army Officer. Was there any problem because of this?

A: No, there was no problem. Then, we began to help the church in Anahime. It was on Sunday morning. In the afternoon we went to a church in countryside, San Gabriel and helped Sunday school there. These are Free Mechodist churches. On Sunday nights I helped a church in Los Angeles.

After I finished school in July, 1927, Theological School at USC, I decided to go to a theological school in Berkeley, PSR. It was in Sep. 1927 that I began to attend the classes there. It was in August when I went to a church in Berkeley. I knew those members there. We stayed at our friend's home.

At that time they didn't have a minister there. So soon they asked me to help that church. I became their pastor. I was there until the begining of the war.

Q: Did your parents live in Oakland still?

A: Yes, at that time they were operating flower business. If you have a flower business, Sunday was a very busy time. So they couldn't attend worship very much. They didn't like that. So he opened a blacksmith shop in a place called Magnes near Oakland. He bought that business. He worked at it for over 2 years. However, it didn't work out. So he began a flower business again. From that time on my father run floral business till the end.

After him, my brother continued the business. It is still existing in San Leandro. They have a large green houses there. It's their headquarter. They have many stores, also. But the main store is in Los Angeles.

Q: You entered PSR. What happend to you after you entered the school?

A: I graduated from PSR in 1929. After that, I was a full time pastor. I was at the same church till the Wrold War II.

Q: You heard the new of Pearl Harbor attack in Berkeley.

A: Yes, I did. It was on Sunday. At that time Rev. Bernett was preaching. He was a superintendent and was going around our area. The attack occured in the morning. We were invited to a lunch at a cirtain home. However, everyone seemed to be anxious and was really worried.

We listen to radio as we ate lunch. Everybody was excited. Then I heard that Japan attacked Pearl Har bor. I didn't believe it was true, but they did. We just hurried through our lunch and went home. When we came home and asked my family members about it, they said it was true.

We didn't know what's going to happen. My wife and children worried about it a lot. Church members in our area used to get together and prayed for peace and no war between Japan and America. This prayer was not heard.

In any case we pledged ourselves to do our best in

that adverse environment. I cried a lot alone. But after that I didn't cry. I decided to dedicate myself and be useful for Japanese community and worked toward evengelism. This was how we left Berkeley.

I was the pastor of this church by 1927, even though I was a part time pastor. Most of the people couldn't think that I was still sttending school. So they would come to me whenever they needed me and I couldn't refuse them. So my wife and I had very hard time. After 1929, after school, I was a full time minister, so everything was okay.

I was also working at the San Quinten from 1930. It was over a month. It was the time of prohibition. So there were many Japanese in there who were imprisoned in relation to Alcoholic vebarage. They must make sake in violation of the law. There were those who wrote bad checks for gambling loss. There were also merderers, too. One third of them were there because of merder.

At one time there were over 50 inmates. Most of the time there were about 30.

On Sunday morning, we had Sun Rise Services at 6:00am.

As soon as I finished breakfast, I went to San Quinten. The service began at 8:00am. Then I came back to my home church for worship.

In the afternoon we had youth meeting and evening was evangelistic meeting. So sometimes I was in 8 meetings a day.

As to work at San quinten, I went there on Sunday morning for service. There was a man by the name of Munematsu Mesaburo. He was a believer before I began to preach there. He let the worship and I preached.

On Monday mornings, I would go there also about 9:00am and interview people. Those people who attended the Sunday morning servie were given privillage to make an appointment with me.

I would see about 10 to 15 people every Monday mornings. We were given a free time together. I would see them by myself. I listen to their life stories, read Bible to them, and pray for them. Then I would come home.

Q: Is there any interesting case?

A: Yes. This man, Mr. Munematsu killed 2 white persons. It happened in Hollywood. It was a misunderstanding, but it happened. He had been in there for 28 years. While I was there he became ill and died.

You see, there was a layman at the prison and whenever I went there, he would come out to escort me. He called me one day and said that Mr. Munematsu seemed to be dying. He said he didn't know when he would die.

So I went there. This man took me to the prison hospital. I was prepared to give him communion. I didn't know when he would die.

When I got there, he was really happy to see me. He asked me to pray. He came down from the bed and knealed down on the floor and prayed. After that I celebrated communion and received it together.

Mr. Shumid was a layman. I was an ordained minister. So I gave them the elements and prayed. Mr. Munematsu died the day after with such a wonderful faith.

I still have the letter which Mr. Shumid gave me somewhere. He said that he had never seen a man who had purer faith then him. He was deeply touched by him. He said that he could not do anything for him, but he did a great deal for Mr. Schumid.

There are others who went back to Japan. One person went to Chicago as soon as the war broke out and attended Chicago church. I knew that because I was going back and forth between Chicago and New York. Later he went back to Japan. When I went back to Japan 17 or 18 years agao, I met his brother.

Another one was very short tempered. He was a son of a very fine family. He ended up killing someonw in his rage. That's why he was there. When I went there, he used to pray very earnestly and was very grateful. But on the oh the other hand, he used to speak ill of other Japanese prisoners. This man killed one in California and also one in New York. So he was sent to Yew York, Attica and I think he died there. I used to send him letters, but the last one came back to me.

There was another one. This man also killed a person. He came from Los Angeles. I gave a funeral service for him.

Another one came from Okayama Ken, by the name of Hiroshige. This man was not that decisive while he was in prison as far as his faith was concerned. He was very glad when I prayed for him. After he came out, he entered into faith and went to Salinas Church. People in Salinas and I pertisioned for pardon to the governer of California. Because of this he was pardened and came out.

When he came out, he stayed with us. I forgot about it, but he always said, "When I came out, Mrs. Nishimura gave me a celebration with miso soup and broiled fish. I never forget that tast."

He worked in Salinas and went back to Japan. He returned to Japan voluntarily. Even after he went back to Japan he wrote to me for a long time. He used to tell me to come back. He wrote to me everymonth.

I wanted to visit Japan last year. I planed to do so this year, too, but it was not possible. This man

died last year. The last letter he sent me said, "Sensei (teacher) you have been saying 'I'll come back! I'll come back!' but how soon can you come back. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to wait too long." So he died.

When he went back to Japan, he got married. He lived to be 86 years old. He was a very grateful man. He mentioned that in every letter. When I went back to Japan his brother's son came to see me. They were very happy to see me.

This man was from Fukushima Ken, from a very welthy family. He was imprisoned for writing bad checks. He came to see me during that interview period. I heard his stories.

He was a very obedient person and entered faith immeadiately. Even if he wore prison cloth, he looked very good. He was pardened soon and came out of the prison. I talked to one of the members of our church about him. This man became sponsor for him and he began to work for him.

A few months later, I got a call from the employer

saying that he had not come home. They didn't know where he went. A few days later, he came to see me in the evening.

Before that my oldest daughter graduated from a grammer school. So he bought her a small dictionary as a graduation gift.

So, he came to see me, so I asked him what happened? Meanwhile a notice came from Berkeley police department in regard to him. Well, he told me that he had stolen Mr. Yamaguchi's check and wrote his checkes. He wrote a few of them in fact.

One of those checks were written for the book store where he bought that small dictionary. The book store discovered it and made a charge against him.

He came to see me. So I urged him to go to police. If he did that, then his punishment would be lighter. So I went to the police station with him. Later I got a letter from the police chief sahing that I worked very hard for the police work.

We uded to talk about him a lot then, but I just don't remember his name right now. But you see, this man

was a prisoner, so my children were really afraid of him. So I couldn't let him stay with us at our home. I let his stay at church. I took beddings to him so he stayed in the church over night. It was at that time that I got a notice about him from the police department.

Q: How long did you continue this prison ministry?

A: Well, I continued it 15 years. I continued that till the begining of the war. I went there one more time after that Pearl Harbor attack. After that Japanese could not leave a cirtian area, so I could not go there. San Quinten was outside of my area.

Q: There was no special pass for you because you were a minister?

A: No, there was not. The head of religious department felt that I should not come there anymore. So I couldn't.

Q: How many Japanese prisoners were there at the time of your last visit to San Quinten?

A: There were about 30 people. Before that there were 50. There was an old man, probably around 60 years old, who was imprisoned because he made moonshine.

He was a very good farmer in a countryside.

There was a man I recall frequently and feel so bad for him. This man lost his wife and livied with their children. He raped his daughter and was discovered. He was sent back to Japan. It was a real tragedy.

There was another who was imprisoned for homicide. In his trial there was no direct evidence, but he was convicted of merder and imprisoned. He said that he didn't do it, but I had a feeling that he did. He was a very talented person. He was very good at making dentures. He came out of the prison. He is retired now.

Q: How did you evacuate?

A: It was in May of 1942. In the begining we were evacuated to Tanforan Assembly Center. We were in Oakland. There was a whiteman who helped our church a lot. Church members brought their possessions and struck them up in the church neatly. The chapel was full. There was a man who kept the record of the boxes ; such and such positions belong to whom. We left this record with this whiteman and went to the assembly center.

The houses owned by our church members were taken care of by our other white friends. He took care of them very well. Because of this none of our members lost anything.

Our house was the parsonage. We were so busy taking care of our members, that we were the last one to do it. On the day we were to be evacuated, we were still working on our house and getting ready to leave.

We had to rent our house so we had to clean it up. We took our piano and stove to the front door. Then the white man took care of them from there. This man was a Christian worker, an evangelist. He was a very good man. We left our car there, too. He took care of it for us.

Q: How many children did you have then?

A: I had 4. The oldest one was in high school. She was 17 years old. Then 15, 13 and 11. The oldest was the girl and the rest were boys. They were able to help.

I accepted what that notice said, so each had either a suitcase or a bag. Small ones just carried their

own toys. So they weren't too much help.

Q: How long did you stay in the Assembly Center?

A: We stayed there till September. Then we went to Utah.

As soon as we entered the Assembly Center, we had Sunday. So we had to talk about it. I was the head of the Northern Califo. Church Federation, so I was asked to be in charge of it. At that time many people were disappointed. These people didn't come to service in the begining.

Things I remember was the hymn, "This is my Father's World." We really ment that this was also God's worl. I remember this well. Well, soon things got settled down. We organized Sunday school and we took turn to take care of Sunday Services, because we had quite a few ministers there.

In September we were taken to Utah, Topaz Relocation Center. It was called the City of Topaz because we could see Topaz mountain. In Utah Salt Lake City was the largest city. Ogden was the next and then Topaz. There wer over 10,000 population there.

Q: How did you go from the Assembly Center to Topaz?

A: We were transported by trains. Those who were sick were in sleeper couches. We were in the regular couches. It was the time when trains were used to transport war materials. So there were not enough trains. The ones wer were transported were the oldest kind.

They drew blind down, so that we wouldn't be able to see outside. It stopped somewhere in Nevada. It was in the middle of desert. We were allowed to get off and stretch.

Q: When you were on the train what was your thought?

A: I don't know what others were thinking, but I was ho hoping that we must develop better evangelism at the next place.

Q: Did you ever have a doubt that you might be killed in the middle of dessert?

A: No, not at all. Soon after we got on the train we saw anrealestate man. WHO FOUND US OUR PARSONAGE. He was the supervisor for this operation. So we talked a lot.

I was worrying about those who didn't have faith.

Blinds were drown and we couldn't see outside, so it was very insecure.

Q: When you left the Assembly Center, you didn't know where youn you were going to be taken to.

A: No, I didn't know. However, there was a information that we were to be taken to a widerness where there is very few population and quite a few miles to the next nearest town. We were to build homes where there was no houses. I really wondered what was going to happen.

Q: What happened when you arrived at the camp?

A: Yes, when we arrived at the camp, my oldest son was in Boy Scout. These scouts were sent ahead of us. Whenh we got off at the train station, we were bussed to the camp. When we arrived there, the Boy Scout's band played music for us to welcome us. My oldest son was one of those Boy Scout band members.

At that time, as soon as we arrived there, the maneger of the Relocation Center, Mr. Ernst, came out to see us with Mr. Goto as his interpretor. Rev. Goto was a graduate of San Anselmo and my collegue.

He told us that we were welcome there. There is no

need to worry about anything. He gave us such a kind words. When we entered the camp, then the trouble started.

They built barracks in desert. When wind blew, it kicked up sand. We were the last one to get in there. One day I wanted to go to a Post Office. On the way to it it started to blow. I couldn't see anything, in any directions, so I didn't know which way to go. There was a house right there, but I couldn't see it.

However, things got better as the time went by. One more thing I remember is that when we were in Tanforan, the center did not have enough mattresses. So they just made outside of the mattress and we were to stuff it with strows. We slept on that mattress for several days.

Unfortunately, my wife came down with asthma. It came from the strow. So we asked the doctor and exchanged it with better one. She was cured immeadiately.

Q: Before the evacuation did FBI came to see you?

A: No. Those people whom FBI came to see were community leaders. They could say that I was a leader, too, but, I am a man of religion, so they did not count me

as one of them.

Japanese school teachers for instance were incarsolated. The church had Japanese school and my wife was teaching Japanese there, but they did not come to see us.

Q: Who were sent to Topaz? other then people from San Francisco?

A: Those people were from San Francisco, Hayward, Oakland, San Leandro. Later on some Hawaiians came in. So I would say there were around 10,000 people there. During that time, our life was very inconvenient. We were given the biggest room. We had 4 children and 2 of us. Six of us were in one room.

We had one stove. In the begining we didn't have enough coal. There were those who went out and got it just for themselves agressively and did not care about others. But those who weren't aggressive couldn't have it. However, soon we had enough coal to go to everyone.

From that time on we burned coal. So even the coldest day we kept ourselves warm. When we burned

coal, the stove got real red. So we didn't feel cold winder because of it.

We ate together at the messhall. This was troublesome especially in regard to children. If we had lots of dished, it could be okay. But every thing was piled up on one big plate. So everything got mixed up.

Children picked everything they liked. Every one got the same amount of food and everything got mixed up. So children didn't like it. Sometimes, they didn't eat. It was such a problem. If they had served food separately, they had read good food.

Q: Did you work?

A: Well, professional people received $19.00 and non-professionals received $16.00. I was classified as professionals, so I received $19.00. However, later on Christian ministers were transfered to denominational headquarters, since the government and religion were separated in this country. It became like that sometime later. My wife worked at the office. So I would say we had enough spending money.

Q: What kind of jobs were there in the camp?

A: Well, there were cooks, waiters and waitresses, janitors, latrine cleaners and also people who worked outside such as farmers. They had to begin to prepare for spring, so they had to work in winter, too. There were many farmers in the camp. The one who was the agricultural engineer supervised it.

Those produce take out of the farm was used in the camps. However, in the begining it didn't grow anything, because it was very cold. They couldn't plant anything till very late. But if it was too late, then it got too cold in the end. So it didn't give them chance to mature. Farming was not very successful in Topaz. It was very successful in Arizona, though.

Q: Was there any one who published newspaper in the camp?

A: Yes, there were. It was done by a mimeograph machine. It was called Topaz Jiho (Topaz Times). It had contributions from many people. It was just two pages in the begining, but it expanded into many pages.

We also published bulletin at out church called Topaz Church Belletin. It was 2 page thing. There was an agricultural bureau and it reported its

findings. My wife worked for it. My wife also contributed articles to Topaz Times, too.

There was lots of free time. So we did lots of things. I worked for church office. Churches had its parish, and one minister was assigned to it. There was a secretary at the church office. So I was busy doing a lot of things.

Q: What are church activities other than Sunday Service?

A: We had Wednesday prayer meetings. There were those who held their own denominational meetings, too. They were free to do so. I was very busy everyday. I visited people, and other family meetings. There was an organization called "Religious Federation". Buddhist joined us so we had a meeting once a week.

Q: What other ministers were with you?

A: There were a Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness, Congregational and Reformed Church.

Q: Do you remember loyalty orth problems?

A: Within a few month, we came upon this problem. There were26 questions or so. Before the loyalty question there were a question concerning Japanese Empelor. I don't remember exactly, but I answered it like

This; "My children were born in America and as long as I live in America, I'll live as an American Citizen and my loyalty lies with America. However, America has not allowed me to become a citizen, so I can not assume that I am American citizen."

What I really wanted to say there was that there is no one sided orth. There is no orth where there is no conditions attached as a citizen.

Q: Did they say anything about that?

A: No, they didn't. I didn't mean that I would be disloyal. But when this country didn't allow me to become a citizen, I cannot pledge my orth as a citizen. That's what I said. I expected some reaction, but they didn't say anything.

Q: What did other people say about it?

A: There were quite bit of reactions to it. The one I know, who was a Christian, really felt that he had to pledge loyalty to Japan. He felt very strongly. There were those who were influenced by those strong opinions of Japan loyalists. There were those who felt like that even though they were Christians.

Q: There were lots of tragedies in Tule Lake. Were

there any probles in Topaz?

A: Yes, there were some. There was a Christian who lived in the same block as we did. His 2 sons volunteered. We had Sun Rise Service every morning at that time. After the Sun Rise Service, his wife told us what happened at her house. She said that the night before somebody threw a can of suwer into their window. I really felt sorry for them.

There was a man whom I wanted to lead to faith. He was a very good man. Though he didn't become a Christian, he introduced his frined's son to us. He began to come to church. In any case, he came to see me. He said, "Don't worry about your own safety. I'm watching out for you. I'll protect you, so no one wouldn't even lift a finger against you."

He was a group leader. Later on he went to Tule Lake. His wife was a real nice person. She was crying as she left Topaz. His father also accompanied him. He died there.

Q: You talked about Nisei volunteers. How did you think about it?

A: Soon after that, an Army Lieutenant came to our camp

and talked to the Nisei in our camp. I went to listen to him. He said that America is in war with your fathers' country. That's why we were there inspite of the fact that we were citizens. Other reason is that average Americans also have wrong idea about Japanese Americans. These were the reasons for our sacrifice.

Even though these might not be right, under the current situation there was nothing we could do about it. In order to help this situation, we must volunteer and show our loyalty to the public. This might be one of the things to bring about happiness in Japanese American society.

I really felt that if I were Nisei I would volunteer.

Q: How many Nisei volunteered at that time?

A: I really don't know. However, I know there were many Nisie who volunteered.

Q: How was the family of voulunteers?

A: Well, there was a person whom I felt really sorry. His name was Kajiwara. He had a only son and a daughter. This man's son volunteered. Before he went, he

talked to Rev. Shimada, a Christian minister and went to war with a very tragic feeling. His parents send him out without showing their tears.

However, soon after that he died at the battle field in Italy. I really felt sorry for the family. His mother was a member of Oakland Methodist Church.

Q: How about your sons?

A: My oldest one was in high school. In 1944 a committee called"Student Relocation Committee" was organized. Those Nikkei students who wanted to go on to colleges were given scholarship and sent them off to schools. Of course those students were excellent students. My oldest daughter was sent to college by this committee. She went to Bather College in New York. It was in Sep. 1944, I think.

Q: How about your sons?

A: Yes, my oldest sons went to New York, because my oldest daughter was there. Those who wanted to go outside had to get a special permit. So I discussed this with my church members. Those young people whose parents used to own floral shops back home went to Chicago and worked for floral shops. So my son went

out first to Chicago. My oldest son and I went out first and my wife and 2 younger ones came afterward.

Q: What was the reason for leaving the camp?

A: There were too many people in the camp. Even in one barrack 5 families lived there. Upper part of the wall was open all the way. So if we discussed things at one end, everybody could hear it at the other end of the barrack. There were lots of things which children couldn't eat at the messhall.

Sometimes, I wanted to buy udon for children, but we couldn't do that. So we bought spagettie and made soup and made immitation noodle for them. Because we were in close neighborhood, we really couldn't have our privacy. Besides, they would talk about my children's behaviors as ministers children.

My younger two children used to fight a lot. They were close in age, too, so... They also got together with others, and did some mischif. So people would talk about it often. My wife began to talk about leaving the camp first. In the begining, I didn't feel I could leave church without having a replacement.

But there were some church members who left the camp

also. So we asked them to understnad our situation and left. It was in March, 1944. We left for New York. It was during the Easter Season.

When we arrived, my wife's brother, Dr.Yamaguchi was in hospital. So we stayed at his house. Then we found an apartment. Our household was 6, so we needed rather large apartment. The apartment was unfurnished, we didn't have any furnitures.

So we borrowed mattresses and lay them on the floor and slept on them. Soon we had our funitures sent to us from California. All those funitures came through Panama Cannal. It was really surprising to find that our funitures were packed neatly in boxes. The box was really a nice box and I felt it was too good to open it. These boxes had my name on it. Of course these boxes were brought to us by a shipping company.

The boxes were nice, but the content were old chairs sofas, and tables. They were so old that we felt kinodoku (felt sorry) for people to have to look at them.

Our apartment was on the 5th floor. They carried all

of them up to our apartment. They sent every one of our possessions to us, even children's toys. They just sent everything. It must taken days to pack those things.

There was a couple, also minister, who came to the area while we were still at the Dr. Yamaguchis. They came to the Yamaguchi's also. They stayed there for long time. They came to live with us, too. We really wanted to begin our evangelism as soon as possible.

There was an office for resettlement program. When I went there, I could find out who came to the area from where. So I depended on the information they gave me. We looked up addresses and went to visit them. It was located on the 6th floor of the Empire State Building.

Later on they created resettlement center. So I went there to meet with new people. Soon I found a job at a Episcopalian Office. I also worked at the library of Colgate College, before I went to work for Episcopalia n office. I also worked at the Church Federation Office. My wife worked there all the time.

My job at the Episcopaliam Church Office was to pack printed materials to be mailed out. I was able to read some of their materials. The time was good, too. I wasn't treated that well, pay wasn't good, but they gave us many dayoffs. So it was very good for me.

Q: Were there many Japanese people who came to New York?

A: Yes, there were a quite few. I was in New York for one year and 6 months. We were allowed to come back to California after Jan, 1945. So I went back to Berkeley in Oct. 1945.

We came back to Berkeley. When we arrived at out house, it was already getting dark. When I looked at my 3rd son, he was laying down on the sidewalk in front of the house and kissing the ground. He was so happy to be back. Soon he found old friends, too.

Q: Did you start the church immeadiately?

A: Yes, of course. At that time, there were 3 Japanese churches in Berkeley. All these three churches joined together and held joint worship. There were Rev. Jujii of Methodist Church also. We took turn to preach. We held our own church prayer meetings.

It must continued for about one year. Then, we went separate way and built our own churches. We had the last worship before we went back to our own church. There were our Free Methodist Church, United Methodist Church, and Heishito Church (Laymen Church).

Q: When you were in New York and when you came back to California, how was the atmosphere of people?

A: Well, everyone was happy to see us back. There were many more children in this area than before. The people who were staying at our house moved out a few days before we came back. We also run hostel, too. Mr. Nakajima was the responsible person for the hostel. By the time we came back, we didn't have to worry about housing.

Q: Did you have unplesent experience on the way to New York, or on the way back to Berkeley?

A: Well, we were given about $5 aday for expense. So we could go to restaurants and eat. However, on thing I remember is that I had my older brother in Chicago. That's where we settled down first. My son and I went to New York to find apartment first. After that my wife and daughters caught up with us.

At that time on the way to New York my wife took a

wrong train because she didn't know her way around. She took a train which was coming to New York via Canada. When a conductor found that out, he told her that she was on the wrong train. She had all kinds of fruits and also bento made by my brother's wife. My daughter carried that with her. Well, the bottom of the box fell out and all the food spilled out all over the place.

They were really embarraced. Then the conductor pushed them out of the train. They felt that they were put to shame and she told me about it with tears. Children also folowed her out of the train. On the next day I went to pick them up at the station. So I would say that the atmosphere was not that good.

However, New York is like Tokyo. People didn't care about their neighbors. They didn't ask about them or think about them. They were very individualistic. So it was easy for us to live in New York.

There were many Jews there, too. They themselves experienced prejudice, so they did understand our situations.

The trouble we had most in New York was that it was

the time of ration. We received definite amount of meet and sugar and others. We had cupons for them. We were in line to get these things. My wife used to go to get them. However, many time when she got right up to the counter, things got all sold out. They told her they didn't have materials any more.

So, I went ot buy them myself. We used to get a piece of hard meet. We had to tenderlize it by pounding it. I wanted to feed meet to my children, so I went to buy meet all over the place.

Another things that we were bothered by bed bugs. They wouldn't come out when it was cold. But in spring and summer they were terrible. They didn't bother me too much. But my wife was affected by them. She got big swells.

One day a friend of ours said that it was the bedbugs. So we looked in the children's bed. Well, they were all over the place. So we squash thembetween thum nails and bought chemicals and what not.

Once my wife went out with her hat. In a subway something fell out of her hat. So she looked at it. It was a big bedbug. Those were the things that happened.

But by and large life in New York was fun. My wife wanted to stay there a few more years. But Ihhad to come back to my church in Berkeley. So we had to leave New York.

My work at the Church Federation was a good job. My children also went to school in New York. I'm not aware of their problems at school there. Besides, my oldest son was in high school, but he was a very good student. So he went to Harvard University.

The next one was in high school, but he had to come back with us.

Q: Did you say you worked for Kyokai Renmei? What is is called in English?

A: The Topaz Federated Church of Christ. I was the executive secretary of the organization. Each denomination was represented by one person. So these composed its board.

Q: Was Buddhist involved it it, too?

A: Yes, of course. It was also called Religious Body.

Q: When you came back to Berkeley, you went back to the parsonage.

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: Then you didn't have the experience of buying a house.

A: Well, yes. When we bought it, we bought it in a Nisei's name. He was one of the officer of the church.

Q: Do you remember anything about reconstruction of Japanese community in West Coast?

A: Mr. Nakajima was a quite hardworking man. He built quite a bit of estate before the war. He bought scrap metals here and sold them to Japan. It was before tha war, of course. So he had quite a bit of capital. There wasnothing lacking in his household.

However, when the war broke out, everything he had was confiscated. His other welth was in Japan. So when he came back from the camp he worked as a gardener. He never had to do such a job. Everyday he went out to learn how to do it. He read book on gardening and learned how to grow cirtain plants. He stadied very hard and worked very hard.

When I saw him doing that I was truly impressed. I felt that ministers must have the same attitude as his. That's the way we should do it. Mr. Nakajima

was a great person. His son works at the headquarter of Presbyterian Church. He is the head of Chaplaincy Program.

I came back to Berkeley in 1945. I stayed there till 1950. I lived in Berkeley for 23 years including internment years.

Then I went to Los Angeles in 1950. I retired there in 1968. So I worked as a minister from 1923 till that day except a few years of schooling. So I was in ministry for 43 years.

Q: When did you receive ordination from the Methodist Church?

A: I didn't, because I was already ordained before I became Free Methodist. I just transfered my membership. When we transfer they would demote you a little bit. So I began as a decon, then became an elder. It was in 1927 that I became a Free Methodist minister.

Q: As an Issei Christian, what do you wish for young Japanese or Asian American Christians?

A: Nisei are in their 60's now. Some have grandchildren already. They are looking forward to retirement.

Nisei received something from Issei. Sansei also received something and they must add something to pass on to the next generation.

I don't see as much effort put out by youger people as much as Issei. I would like them to learn it from Issei. Nisei must learn it from Issei and then pass it on to Sansei. These things cannot be done as one wishes, though. I don't know what God is going to do about it, but...

Q: How do you feel about Sansei Christians?

A: I was hoping Sansei would do a lot of work. Well, I think Nisei are doing very well. In our conference there are Nisei. I was the Chairman of the conference for 8 years. Later on Nisei took over my position and is doing a good job.

Issei didn't pay too much attention to details. They felt that so long as they have faith in God, things will work out. However, Nisei aren't like that. Nisei must think things through before they make decisions. So I'm not worried about that at all. I feel Sansei are like Nisei. I know they'll do a good job.

When I was in Los Angeles, because Issei were getting

older, so we had a discussion aboutcreating apartment for them. So we did. We built 10 units apartment houses by our church. It has been 9 years since it was built. When it was built, we weren't sure whether or not we could make payments. We pledged toward it, in preparation for payments. However, it was unneccessary. In 6 more years we will be able to pay off our debts. It's always full. Our tenants are also Sunday participants. It also helps church finace, too. At the same time these people are nurtured. It was a real good project, though was a little hard for us financially.

There were 2 buildings which belonged to the church. We made boarding house out of that. There are 11 young people from Japan live there. They also come to church, too. These projects are very helpful to church, even though it was difficult financially sometimes.

I have a very good hope for future, as long as leaders follow God's will. When we look at our community, Sansei are doing lots of things. I feel Sansei are really thinking about Issei. They also respect grandparents' opinions, may be even better than Nisei. I feel they will do right thing without taking wrong

course.

Q: Do you feel Sansei are close to Issei than Nisei?

A: Well, there are different cases, but isn't that the way it is? That's the way human beings are made. Grandparents and grandchildren are closer, I think. Children here are wanting to know more about Japan than their parents. They live in a differnt age, too.

There was a time when Nisei felt haji (shame) to have their parents born in Japan. Now, it's the other way around. They are proud of being born as Japanese.

So the second child in this household is wearing a shirts with Hinomaru(Japanese flag). Nisei couldn't do it. I don't know when these practice came to being, but it is very good. I don't know where they are going from here, but... I am looking forward to seeing their development. I feel Sansei and Yonsei are very hopeful.

Q: At least Sansei are not feeling sorry for themselves being Japanese.

A: That's true. They feel they are equals and feeling

very free. That's very good.

When children are playing outside, there is no feeling of being less than others. There is no feeling of better or less because of race. It doesn't matter whether they are blacks or others. When it comes to that, we adults are behind. They are ahead of us.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

A: Yes, when Pearl Harbor was attacked, Dec. 7th, it was Sunday. Soon the Chrsitmas came. Many people were worried about their future. We, Christians, knew that somehow God would show our way, but others didn't know that.

Right before the Christmas there was someone knocking on the door. When I opened the door a tall white couple were standing there with two children. They had a big box. She said that she was a school teacher at Hillside Elementary School. Every year she had her class write something for people who need some encouragement. Her class discussed it and decided that Japanese people were the most unfortunate people right then. So they decided to give us letters. The box had many letters in it. I was really glad to received that box.

In camp, we were evacuated to camps. It was Christmas 1942 when we received many presents mainly from East through church federation. So we distributed the gifts to every family in camp. We also received gifts from Japan through the Red Cross. We crceived Shoyu and Miso. We distributed so much per block. Shoyu came in big barrels. So we put it in small bottles and distributed them to each household. It was a very good gifts. Japanese loyalist said that it's because Japan was winning. That's why they could do such a thing.

Q: Did you hold service every week even after the Pearl Harbor attack?

A: Yes, we did.

What did you say in your sermon at the first Christmas after the attack?

A: It was rather a regular Christmas sermon. However, I do remember the one I gave before we entered the Assembly center. It was from Daniel. Daniel was captured by enemy. And yet, he worshiped at every morning, noon and evening facing toward Jerusalem. Daniel's enemies told this to the king. However, he was not afraid. He worshiped at the regular time, three times a day. "We are entering the camp. Don't

forget our faith. No matter what happens, we must worship God openly and couragiously." That's what I said.

The other one was that Jesus has entered Jerusalem. One of the disciples said, "It is such a beautiful fort. It'll keep standing for many years." Then Jesus said, "No, when the time comes, there will be no stone stranding on another." It will be destroyed.

Well, Peal Harbor was attacked and we were being evacuated. "There will be a time when everything will be judged. For Nisei this is your country and yet they are doing this to you. But things will be judged accordingly. So be patient. We don't know what may happen to us tomorrow, but God's will will be done. So don't worry. Have faith and let us go into the camp together."

I knew that the evacuation was not justified and there will be a time when this action will be revealed and criticized.

One thing I was very glad to see was that there was no one in my church who sold their homes. When it was allowed for us to come back to California, they were able to come back to their houses quickly.

END